

3.5.5 Oakley Fire Protection District

This FPD covers a total of 63,614 acres including 62,286 acres of private land, 1,262 acres of State land, and 66 acres of U.S. Forest Service land (Table 6). Major land uses within the District include rangeland, recreation on Federal public lands, and agriculture on private lands producing alfalfa, wheat, sugar beets, potatoes and feedlots. There are few platted subdivisions within this FPD, however parcel development for homes and farm clusters are prevalent outside of the town of Oakley. Many of the newer homes are well landscaped and maintained and meet or exceed the Fire wise standards generally accepted in Idaho, however the older home sites and farm clusters tend to harbor heavy stands of grass and shrubs. These areas will present some problems for firefighters if ignitions occur during the normal fire season and well into a dry fall. Conversion of irrigation to center pivot systems from rectangular systems is increasing the amount of unmanaged grass and shrub land along field edges and corners where the pivot systems don't reach. In some case these leave corners are being developed into home sites.

Because the area has experienced extreme drought over the past several years, this FPD has had several fires. Over the past 10 years the FPD has responded to an average of 22 fires each year with 11 of these responses to wildland fires. Figures 11 and 12 are examples of heavy fuel loads adjacent to roads within the District. Figure 13 shows extremely heavy fuels south of Oakley FPD and within an open or unprotected area.

R&S Enterprise (2003a) prepared a Mitigation Assessment for the city of Oakley and the Oakley FPD in 2003. This assessment included a hazardous fuels reduction program, costs, and maps identifying the need to install buffer strips for 17 landowners (844 acres), sites adjacent to public and State Lands (844 acres), and for the Basin Interagency Project Area (770 acres). The program would reduce the wildfire potential a catastrophic wildfire, decrease the fire department response time, and reduce the wildfire potential for an estimated 120 structures throughout the area. In addition, the Mitigation Assessment identified the Oakley Fire Department infrastructure including: personnel, training, equipment, and facility. Section 4.0 of this document provides the specific mitigations and associated costs for this FPD.

At present, the City of Oakley has a good water system with excellent pressure to wet hydrants throughout the city. Free-flowing water is available within the FPD and includes perennial streams and their tributaries and numerous stock watering ponds.



Figure 11. Fuels along roadway near Basin, ID.



Figure 12. Fuels along roadway to Big Cottonwood Wildlife Management Area.



Figure 13. Heavy fuels south of Oakley and within an unprotected area.

Fire, Structural, and Community Assessments for Oakley FPD

The following is a summary of the Fire Hazard Assessment for Oakley FPD. Table 19 shows the complete results. Overall, the single legal subdivision in this FPD received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for 1 out of 6 elements (17%) and a Class B (medium) rating for 5 out of 6 elements (83%).

Vegetation Type – Sagebrush-grassland is the primary carrier of any ignition to the wildland-urban interface.

Slope – Most slopes within the assessment area are less than 10%.

Aspect – The majority of the structures within the assessment area face east.

Elevation – The elevation within the assessment area averages is between 3500-5500 feet.

Fuel Type – The fuel types within the assessment area is medium fuels (brush, medium shrubs, and small trees).

Fuel Density – The fuel density within the assessment area is broken moderate fuels adjacent to federal land (31 to 60% cover).

Fuel Bed Depth – The majority fuel bed depth with the assessment area averages less than 1 foot.

Table 19. Fire Hazard Assessment for Oakley FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Vegetation Type	Rating Elements					
		Slope	Aspect	Elevation	Fuel Type	Fuel Density	Fuel Bed Depth
Whittle	Sagebrush/grass	A	B	B	B	B	B

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

The following is a summary of the Structural Hazard Assessment for Oakley FPD. Table 20 shows the complete results. Overall, the subdivision received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for 3 out of 7 elements (43%) and a Class B (medium) 4 out of 7 elements (57%).

Structure Density – The structure density within the assessment area is at least one structure per 0-5 acres.

Proximity to Fuels – Structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface are 40-100 feet to flammable fuels.

Building Materials – Ten to 50% of the structures have fire resistant roofs and/or siding.

Survivable Space – The majority of structures within the assessment area have improved survivable space around the property.

Roads – Roads within the assessment area are maintained, with some narrow, two –lane roads with no shoulders.

Response Time – Response time to the assessment area is 20 minutes or less.

Access – There is limited access routes to the assessment area. Two ways in, two ways out with moderate grades.

Table 20. Structural Hazard Assessment for Oakley FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Rating Elements						
	Structure Density	Proximity of Fuels	Building Materials	Survivable Space	Roads	Response Time	Access
Whittle	A	B	B	A	B	A	B

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

Table 21 summarizes the Community Assessment for the Oakley FPD.

Table 21. Community Assessment Summary for Oakley FPD

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A, B, or C)
Community Description	There is a clear line where residential business, and public structures meet wildland fuels. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area.	There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area.	The community generally exists where homes, ranches, and other structures are scattered but adjacent to wildland vegetation.	Varies, but usually B
Response Time	Prompt response time to interface areas (20 min or less).	Moderate response time to interface area (20-40 minutes).	Lengthy response time to interface area (40+ minutes).	A
Firefighting Capability	Adequate structural fire department. Sufficient personnel, equipment, and wildland firefighting capability and experience.	Inadequate fire department. Limited personnel, and or equipment but with some wildland firefighting experience and training.	Fire department non-existent or untrained and/or equipped to fight wildland fire.	A
Water Supply	Adequate supply of fire hydrants and pressure, and/or open water	Inadequate supply of fire hydrants, or limited pressure.	No pressure water system available near interface. No	B

	sources (pools, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc.).	Limited water supply.	surface water available.	
Local Emergency Operations Group (EOG)	Active EOG. Evacuation plan in place.	Limited participation in EOG. Have some form of evacuation process.	No EOG. No evacuation plan in place.	A
Structure Density	At least one structure per 0-5 acres.	On structure per 5-10 acres.	Less than one structure per 10 acres.	A
Community Planning Practices	County/local laws and zoning ordinances require use of fire safe residential design and adequate ingress/egress of fire suppression resources. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Local officials have an understanding of appropriate community planning practices for wildfire loss mitigation. Fire department has limited input to fire safe development and planning efforts.	Community standards for fire safe development and protection are marginal or non-existent. Little or no effort has been made in assessing and applying measures to reduce wildfire impact.	B
Fire Mitigation Ordinances, Laws, or Regulations in Place	Have adopted local ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping, building and planning. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Have voluntary ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping and building practices. Fire Department practices in planning process.	No local codes, laws or ordinances requiring fire safe building landscaping or planning processes.	B
Fire Department Equipment	Good supply of structure and wildland fire apparatus and miscellaneous specialty equipment.	Smaller supply of fire apparatus in fairly good repair with some specialty equipment.	Minimum amount of fire apparatus, which is old and in need of repair. None or little specialty equipment.	B
Fire Department Training and Experience	Large, fully paid fire department with personnel that meet NFPA or NWCG training requirements, are experienced in wildland fire, and have adequate equipment.	Mixed fire department. Some paid and some volunteer personnel. Limited experience, training and equipment to fight wildland fire.	Small, all volunteer fire department. Limited training, experience and budget with regular turnover of personnel. Do not meet NFPA or NWCG standards.	C
Community Fire Safe Efforts and programs already in place	Organized and active groups (Fire Dept.) providing educational materials and programs for their community.	Limited interest and participation in educational programs. Fire Department does some prevention and public education.	No interest of participation in educational programs. No prevention/education efforts by fire department.	A
Community support and attitudes	Actively supports urban interface plans and actions.	Some participation in urban interface plans and actions.	Opposes urban interface plans and efforts.	B, Money/ Bonds